

## Human Rights and Democracy

Human rights and democracy are meant to empower individuals, and thereby free them.

But today's world is [very far from ensuring human rights](#), and each individual has little or no power over the government, as well as the wealthy persons and corporations, that control our lives.<sup>1</sup>

What went wrong?

Because of [cognitive dissonances](#) in the way we perceive the world, we never designed our systems of human rights to account for future generations, and to ensure [intergenerational justice](#). Instead of human rights and democracy, we use [unsustainable economic growth](#) as a normative baseline. For example, the [Children's Rights Convention](#) is designed to protect human rights that are specific to children. But there have been no serious efforts to link the Convention to better family planning and actually ensure compliant outcomes, where children are born into conditions sufficient for the level of development the Convention was intended to guarantee them. There is no way to ensure compliance without that link. In other words, we never took cooperatively investing in kids seriously, and families remain fundamentally isolated from their communities.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, human rights and democracy are based on the fundamental condition that [individuals are acting as free and equal persons in public affairs](#). But because we never ensured children their human rights and because we never accounted for [the role poor family planning plays in creating massive inequality and differences in opportunities in life](#), we never actually fulfilled the fundamental condition.

### The Role of Inequality

Today people [do not act as free and equal persons](#). The U.S. has the highest inequality in the developed world, and [inequality undermines democracy](#). As the Harvard Gazette reported, [economic and political inequities are interlaced, leaving many Americans poor and voiceless](#). Researchers at Hofstra University [point to](#) evidence that a "healthy democracy cannot survive

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<sup>1</sup> Consider, for example, that "the U.S. House of Representatives has [for the nation as a whole] one voting member for every 747,000 or so Americans," which is "by far the highest population-to representative ratio among a peer group of industrialized democracies, and the highest it's been in U.S. history." Moreover, to bring the ratio in line with that which existed at the country's founding, the House of Representatives would need to balloon to a whopping 5,697 members, or nearly double that of the largest national legislature in the world: China's National People's Congress, with 2,980 members. DeSilver, D. (2018). U.S. population keeps growing, but House of Representatives is same size as in Taft era. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/facttank/2018/05/31/u-s-population-keeps-growing-but-house-of-representatives-is-same-size-as-intaft-era/>.

<sup>2</sup> The State, while it respects the liberty of each in what specifically regards himself, is bound to maintain a vigilant control over his exercise of any power which it allows him to possess over others. This obligation is almost entirely disregarded in the case of the family relations – a case, in its direct influence on human happiness, more important than all others taken together. John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, p, 103 (Elizabeth Rapaport ed., Hackett Publ'g Co. 1978) (1859)

where there are extreme gaps between the top and bottom of the income distribution.” Many others [have found](#) that when inequality is high, trust and civic engagement [are low](#).

As the Harvard Gazette [explained](#), “...the political supporters with the greatest access to candidates are usually the very wealthy. Backers with both influence and access often help to shape the political agenda. The result is a kind of velvet rope that can keep those without economic clout on the sidelines, out of the conversation.” Massive disparities in our economy, and thus our democracy, are largely shaped by tax policies that shift wealth to the top 1%. [The socioeconomic gap is perpetuated and amplified by poor family planning and a failure to ensure kids a fair start in life](#).

It is impossible to fix this problem, and ensure truly consensual relations, without starting at the source in the disparities and reforming [the way we plan families](#).

### **Crowding Out Meaningful Democracy**

Because we failed to ensure human rights, minimum standards of welfare, and equality for children, we enabled explosive and exploitative population growth that created a feedback loop, making the effective social cooperation necessary to protect children infeasible. That exponential population growth degraded democracies from the inside out drowning out each person’s voice and effective role.<sup>3</sup> What influence does the average person have over federal, or even state, policies? Does a U.S. president really “represent,” in any meaningful way, over 300 million people? The U.S. had four million people when its political system was designed.

Without each person having a voice and effective role there is no democracy, and little incentive to even try.<sup>4</sup> As such, the majority of Americans are [able](#) to read at a 7th or 8th-grade [level](#) – well below what’s required to interpret the United States Constitution – and lack basic information about science and other disciplines, making them susceptible to things like climate change denial.

This situation is exacerbated by family planning systems that do not align with democratic educational systems, something painfully obvious in recent [public discourse regarding](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Each member’s role in a democracy is, *ceteris paribus*, inverse to the size of that democracy. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract* 50-51 (Donald A. Cress ed. & trans., Hackett 1987) (1762); David Hume, *Moral Philosophy* 89, 97 (Geoffrey Sayre-McCord ed., Hackett 2006) (referring to the evident benefit of rules to deal with the selfishness and confined generosity of men, Hume notes: “But when society has become numerous, and has encreas’d to a tribe or nation, this interest is more remote; nor do men so readily perceive, that disorder and confusion follow upon every breach of these rules, as in a more narrow and contracted society.”); Rousseau at 43 (referring to the limits of polities “so as not to be too large to be capable of being well governed, nor too small to be capable of preserving itself on its own. . . . [t]he more the social bond extends the looser it becomes, and in general a small state is proportionately stronger than a large one. A thousand reasons prove this maxim.”).

<sup>4</sup> “The insignificance of any one vote to electoral outcomes makes it rational for most citizens to devote little effort to acquiring political knowledge. They also have little incentive to engage in unbiased evaluation of the information they do know” Somin, I. (2013). *Democracy and political ignorance: Why smaller government is smarter*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

[America's "baby bust."](#) which [assumed that family planning systems should create future people capable of consuming, working and paying taxes](#), but not necessarily governing.

The population growth resulting from not investing in or empowering people has degraded our ecosystems, and [compounded threats to human rights, democracy, and freedom](#) by making the conditions for social cooperation more challenging. In the face of all of this, [forces that are opposed to human rights and democracy – and empowering each individual – are pushing increased growth rates, and more and more children through failing educational and child welfare systems, in order to exploit a larger and less prepared population](#). That is the opposite of what a human rights-based family planning system would do: Ensure a high level of development, in terms of nutrition, health, education, and socialization, for each child. These entities, [from conglomerates to high profile industrialists](#), want to maintain top-down economic hierarchies rather than bottom-up, and human rights-based, democracies.

### **We can reverse these mistakes.**

Because of its fundamental nature the [Fair Start model](#) creates true systems of human rights, democracy, and freedom. It is designed to fix these mistakes, and empower and liberate people, by [physically integrating people within their legal systems](#). Doing so legitimates those systems at the most fundamental level – empowering each individual from the point at which they enter the world.

Imagine the freedom that comes with being given real opportunities in life, the freedom of living in functional communities where you can have confidence in the people around you, the freedom of smaller and autonomous democracies where you have a role in creating the rules under which you live, the freedom of nature, and the safe and healthy environment that comes with it. This all begins with children's right to a fair start in life. It is the lexically primary human right, the right that most makes us who we are, and as such, the one human right that seems to override all conflicting interests. The relatively few people in the world who have power, both in business and government, push against this freedom because their power lies in exploiting the large and vulnerable populations poor family planning creates.

Human rights and democracy are meant to empower individuals, and thereby free them. The key to building lasting systems of human rights and democracy is by starting at the source, using Fair Start family planning to decentralize concentrations of power, including governments, large corporations, and wealthy families and individuals, by shifting their resources to empower and free future children. [Having Kids](#) is helping push this process of improving family planning forward, through things like child-first [Fair Start order legislation](#) (meant to link the most basic requirements of the Convention to family planning systems) and [rights to nature litigation](#) that work together to temporalize and reorient our understanding of things like human rights and democracy. These and other applications of the Fair Start model will build [a human rights-based and democratic future for all](#).